



Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)

Curry Leaf



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Botanical Name	:	<i>Murraya koenigii</i> Linn.
Tamil Name	:	Karivepillai
Sanskrit Name	:	Kalashaka
English Name	:	Curry Leaf

Distribution and Habitat

Murraya koenigii (L.) belongs to the family *Rutaceae* and is commonly known as Curry leaf, more or less deciduous shrub or small trees found throughout India up to an altitude of 1500m and are cultivated for its aromatic leaves. *M. koenigii* originates from east and south part of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China and Hainan but widely cultivated in South-East Asia and some parts of the United States and Australia.



It is a small tree, growing 4-6 m tall, with a trunk up to 40 cm diameter. The leaves are pinnate, with 11-21 leaflets, each leaflet 2-4 cm long and 1-2 cm broad. They are highly aromatic. The flowers are small white, and fragrant. Fruits occur in close clusters, small ovoid or sub-globose, glandular, thin pericarp enclosing one or two seeds having spinach green color. The small black, shiny berries are edible, but their seeds are poisonous.

Parts used

Leaves, bark, root and fruits.

Phyto-chemical constituents

Alkaloids, flavonoids, phenolics, saponins, proteins, free amino acids, sterols, nicotinic acid, Vitamin C and carotene.

Uses

Fresh leaves, dried leaf powder, and essential oil of this plant are widely used for flavouring soups, curries, fish and meat dishes, egg dishes, traditional curry powder blends, seasoning and ready to use other food preparations. Curry leaves are boiled with coconut oil which is then used as an excellent hair tonic for retaining natural hair tone and stimulating hair growth. The essential oil is utilized by soap and cosmetic aromatherapy industry.

Medicinal uses

Murraya koenigii is widely used in Indian cookery from centuries and have a versatile role to play in traditional medicine. The plant is credited with tonic and stomachic properties. Bark and roots are used as stimulant and externally to cure eruptions and bites of poisonous animals. Green leaves are eaten raw for cure of dysentery, diarrhoea and vomiting. Leaves and roots are also used traditionally as anthelmintic, analgesic, piles, inflammation, itching and are useful in leucoderma and blood disorders. Influenza and rheumatism can also be treated with these leaves (Bhandari, 2012). The juices of the roots have hepato-protective actions and are proven to be good for kidney related pains. Fruits are highly nutritious with several medicinal properties, astringency being one of them (Khedkar, 2015). This plant has been reported to have anti-oxidative, cytotoxic, anti-diabetic, anti-microbial, anti-bacterial, anti-ulcer, and cholesterol reducing activities. Richness of Vitamin A and calcium in curry leaf oil is used for strengthening the bone, osteoporosis, calcium deficiency, and radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatments of cancer (The Wealth of India, 2003).

Conclusion

Murraya koenigii is a leafy medicinal as well as green leafy plant. It has wide culinary use and is one of the main components of formulations in the traditional Ayurvedic system. Documenting ethno-medicinal curry leaf is extremely important as it gives very useful information on growers in conservation and use, which could be effectively used in developing appropriate research and development programmes on this plant species.

